transparency and accountability. The experiences of countries such as India that have progressively provided a legal basis for the right to information can prove extremely useful in this regard.

Minority status to self-financing professional colleges

2813. SHRI A. VIJAYARAGHAVAN: Will the Minister of HUMAN RESOURCE DEVELOPMENT be pleased to state:

(a) whether there are provisions for applying for minority status to self-financing professional colleges;

(b) if so, the details of the above provisions and the number of institutions of various categories having minority status during the last three years, State-wise, category-wise and community-wise;

(c) the number of students of respective minority community, and non-minority community of the above institutions during the last three years, year-wise, category-wise, State-wise and institutions-wise; and

(d) the total number of professional colleges and of students belonging to minority and non-minority communities for various courses during the last three years, year-wise, State-wise, community-wise and course-wise?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF HUMAN RESOURCE DEVELOPMENT (SHRIMATI D. PURANDESWARI): (a) to (c) Under Article 30(1) of the Constitution, minorities have the right to establish and administer institutions of their choice, including self-financing professional colleges. In exercise of the Constitutional right, the minorities in each State have established educational institutions. An educational institution is recognized as a minority educational institution by the authority of the Central Government or the State Government, under whose, jurisdiction such institutions are established. The Central Government has so far recognized three institutions deemed to be universities and one Central University (Aligarh Muslim University) as minority educational institutions. The recognition granted to the Aligarh Muslim University is *Sub-judice* in the Supreme Court of India. Information in respect of educational institutions falling under the jurisdiction of States is not maintained centrally. The National Commission for Minority Educational Institutions (NCMEI) is also competent under Section 12B and 12C of the (NCMEI) Act, 2004 to decide on the minority status of an educational institution.

(d) According to information from the institutions recognized by the Central Government as minority educational institutions, the number of students enrolled is as given below:

Institutions	Year	Total number of Students admitted	No. of students belonging to minority Communities
1	2	3	4
1. Jamia Hamdard	2005-06	1179	718

1		2	3	4
		2006-07	1109	700
		2007-08	1158	780
2.	Karunya	2005-06	1167	937
	University	2006-07	1665	1198
	Coimbatore	2007 -08	1879	1263
3.	Allahabad	2005-06	2413	370
	Agriculture	2006-07	2568	380
	Institute	2007-08	2622	453

Literacy rate among SCs/STs

2814. SHRI AMIR ALAM KHAN: Will the Minister of HUMAN RESOURCE DEVELOPMENT be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government are aware of the low literacy rate among Scheduled Castes/Scheduled Tribes in the country;

(b) if so, the details thereof;

(c) the steps taken by Government to increase their literacy rate; and

(d) the details of schemes introduced by Government for imparting education to SCs/STs in the country?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF HUMAN RESOURCE DEVELOPMENT (SHRI MD. ALI ASHRAF FATMI): (a) and (b) According to 2001 Census the literacy rate of Scheduled Castes was 54.69% and Scheduled Tribes was 47.10% as against the national average of 64.84%. Whereas the increase in the overall literacy rate of the country during 1991-2001 was 12.63%, the increase in the literacy rate of scheduled castes was 17.28% and scheduled tribes was 17.50% during the same period.

(c) and (d) The Universalisation of Elementary Education and eradication of adult illiteracy form the two-pronged strategy for improving the literacy rate of the country. Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan (SSA) is a comprehensive programme for universalizing quality Elementary Education by 2010. The SSA promotes diverse strategies, specially targeting scheduled caste/scheduled tribes children. The SSA seeks to a develop context specific intervention to tackle the problems of education of SC/ST children. Some of the interventions of SSA are as follows:

- Providing adequate infrastructure for elementary schooling in districts with concentration of SC/ST population.
- Free text books to SC/ST Children from classes 1-VIII.
- Provision af Rs. 15 lakhs to each districts far special innavative activities to promate education of Scheduled Castes/Scheduled Tribes children.